

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Local Providers partner to bring Free Community Screening of Award Winning Film

Jumping Off Bridges to our community

As part of Mental Illness awareness week, the Ben Gordon Center, Family Service Agency, Youth Service Bureau and Suicide Prevention Services are partnering to bring the award winning film *jumping off bridges* to our community. The writer/director Kat Candler along with actor Bryan Chafin will be on hand to answer questions and provide autographs.

The free movie screening will be held Friday October 10th at 7:00 pm at Kishwaukee College in the Jenkins Auditorium (A-224).

Jumping off bridges is a story ripped from Kat Candler's fixation on adolescence. "I tend to gravitate towards the romanticism of youth. Everything's so heightened and new." Candler's first feature film, *cicadas* (2000) a teenage love story, won festival awards across the US and was hailed as "possibly the best teen misfit romance drama since the mid-eighties" by **Ain't It Cool News**. It's "a heart wrenching coming of age teen flick somewhere between *Degrassi Jr. High* and *The Virgin Suicides*", said Michael Chamey from **The Austin Chronicle**. She was instantly branded as the girl in Austin who makes movies about teenagers.

Inspired by invincible friendships, junior high journal entries, heart breaking crushes and the complexities of losing loved ones, Kat Candler spent 2001 penning *jumping off bridges*. The story follows an adventurous group of four best friends in the trenches of adolescence. It

centers on Zak Nelson and his struggle to come to terms with a family tragedy.

"We are pleased to be able to partner with Family Service Agency, Youth Service Bureau and Suicide Prevention Services to be able to bring *jumping off bridges*, to our community. We are also pleased that Kat Candler and Bryan Chafin are able to be part of our free community screening to tell their story of hope and to reduce the stigma of mental illness and suicide and bring awareness to healing and recovery. The film has had a powerful effect on audiences as a tool for healing, reducing stigma and creating awareness of this very important issue," said Michael Flora of Ben Gordon Center.

"This is an opportunity to bring our community together; youth, adults, families, and create a dialogue about mental illness, suicide, grief and the process of healing," stated Deanna Cada, Executive Director of the Youth Service Bureau. "These are difficult topics to address. The viewing of "*jumping off bridges*" provides a context to bring these issues to light and develop a network of support."

Candler has been called the John Hughes of her generation, tapping into the authenticity and honesty of teenagers. **The Austin Chronicle** described her as "one of the most astute observers of teenage behavior working behind a camera today, and *jumping off bridges*, her powerful, resonant examination into the impact of suicide on those left behind is as realistic a narrative portrait of love, death, and human debris as anything you're ever likely to see onscreen." Candler's ability to take some of the darkest and most jagged truths about fear, regret, sadness, loss, suffering and pain and break them open for her audience to experience in ways that are both optimistic and honest makes her one of the most important and promising young filmmakers on the cinematic landscape," says **Filethirteen.com**.

"As part of the Steering Committee for the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (NSPL) which has services for depressed and/or suicidal people across our country, we unanimously supported this film when it had its initial screening," said Stephanie Weber, Executive Director of Suicide Prevention Services, Inc. "It helps to 'normalize' mental illness and suicidal feelings, letting a teen know that he/she is not the only one having this illness and/or these thoughts. The thoughts don't cause suicide; ignoring them and then acting on them does. It opens up dialogue and THAT can save a life."

Did You Know?

Suicide is the eighth leading cause of death nationally and ranks above homicides and deaths from drunk driving.

- One suicide occurs every 16 minutes, with one attempt every minute...
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 24-year-olds
- The highest suicide rate is among Caucasian men over 50 who are not medically ill.
- Of the many millions of Americans who suffer from depression in any given year, over 80% can be effectively treated, but only 30% actually seek help, and of that number, slightly more than 15% are accurately diagnosed and effectively treated.
- Although most gun owners reportedly keep a firearm in their home for "protection" or "self-defense," 83% of gun related deaths in these homes are the result of a suicide, often by someone other than the gun owner.
- From suicides that occurred between 1970 and 1995, there are an estimated 4.53 million survivors in the U.S.; this number grows by 186,000 per year.
- The number one cause of suicide is depression undiagnosed, untreated, or ineffectively treated.

"These statistics are not just numbers. They are mothers and fathers, sisters, brothers, children, spouses, lovers and friends left to cope with the painful legacy that is suicide," says Sue Plote, Family Service Agency's executive director. "Family Service Agency is extremely pleased to be a part of bringing *Jumping Off Bridges* - a film that provides hope and healing for those surviving loss - to the DeKalb County Community."

"I tried to bring an honesty and sincerity to the film, to the characters, their relationships and the aftermath of suicide. Having always been drawn to stories of youth, I've felt a responsibility to bring thoughtful and intelligent teenagers to the screen," said Candler. "At heart, this story is about the struggle of grief. How each of us deals with grief in our own strange and debilitating ways. How we search for answers at a time when there are none. We get lost beneath our anger and betrayal and flounder for stability and consolation. We seek comfort and solace from the people we push furthest away. It's a story about friendship. Those moments and adolescent comradeships that are forever etched into our memories and junior high diaries. It's a story about strength and a story about

finding hope," added Candler.

"An estimated 57.7 million Americans, approximately 1 in 4, suffer from a mental disorder," said Michael Flora, President and CEO of the Ben Gordon Center.

Mental illnesses are medical conditions that can range from mild depression to more serious conditions such as anxiety disorder, major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and borderline personality disorder. They affect a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning, making it difficult for sufferers to cope with the ordinary demands of life.

"Mental illnesses are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and Canada for ages 15-44. For society, the cost of untreated mental illness is more than 100 billion dollars each year in the United States alone. The World Health Organization, in the *Global Burden of Disease* study reveals that mental illness, including suicide, accounts for over 15 percent of the burden of disease in established market economies, such as the United States. This is more than the disease burden caused by all cancers," added Flora. "Now is the time to invest in and bring greater awareness to mental health in our community."

"I wanted to tell a story about this tight group of friends and how they and their family members cope with loss," says Candler. "The response from counselors and therapists who help people through grief has been amazing. It's been great to hear that they feel the actors and the story bring honesty and hope to something that so many people experience," added Candler.

"It's a film that allows people to talk about how loss affects those left behind and we've learned that it is so important to talk about this, people need to talk about this," says Producer Stacy Schoolfield. "We've seen the film affect people in very powerful ways. It definitely strikes a chord," says Schoolfield. "We hope to use the film as a means of creating awareness, and as a tool that will help people move on and heal."

"The film **jumping off bridges** is a heartfelt, thoughtful, and accurate depiction of what life is like for those left behind when a loved one or friend commits suicide. It respectfully depicts the complexity of emotions that people experience in the face of this psychiatric tragedy and how counselors can sensitively identify and support clients who experience it," said Mary Bartlett, **Counseling Today Magazine**.

The four agencies are committed to helping individuals and families in our community

For more Information Call:

Ben Gordon Center815 756-4875

www.bengordoncenter.org

Family Service Agency.....815 758-8616

www.realsolutionstoday.org

Youth Service Bureau815-748-2010 www.dcysb.com

Suicide Prevention Services630-482-9696... www.spsfv.org

Or the BGC response Line 24 hour crisis line at 1-866-BGC-0111 if you need help coping. Please know that you do not have to be suicidal or in immediate crisis to reach out to us. We are here to help individuals and families cope.

Ben Gordon Center offers mental health and recovery services for adults, children, and families in our community. Family counseling, mental health, Employee Assistance Programs and substance abuse experts are credentialed and licensed in their field providing confidential quality care. The professionals at the Ben Gordon Center include: psychiatrists, advanced practice nurses, psychologists, nurses, counselors, social workers, chemical dependency professionals, case managers, vocational and employment specialists. Ben Gordon Center offers professional counseling and recovery with convenient offices in DeKalb, Genoa and Sandwich. Ben Gordon Center offers services on a sliding fee for those who qualify. Ben Gordon Center, Inc. also accepts Medicaid, Medicare, and all insurance plans. The agency is fully accredited by the Joint Commission, the Office of Mental Health and the Office of Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services.

Family Service Agency of DeKalb County is a premier social service agency, providing support to individuals and families throughout the lifecycle. Family Service Agency is comprised of five distinct departments – Big Brothers Big Sisters, Center for Counseling, Child Life & Family Education, Children's Advocacy Center and Senior Services Center. A host of programs are available through these departments, and all services are provided by experienced professionals.

Family Service Agency of DeKalb County accepts insurance, and scholarship and reduced fees are available for those who qualify. In some instances, services can be provided at no cost to the client. Family Service Agency's main office is located at 14 Health Services Drive, and satellite offices are located in DeKalb and Sandwich. For more information about the services at Family Service Agency call

815-758-8616, 815-786-7079 in Sandwich, or visit their website at www.realsolutionstoday.org.

The Youth Service Bureau (YSB) offers counseling for youth ages 8 – 18 and their families. Therapists at YSB are skilled in assessing the needs of families as well as recognizing their strengths. YSB has a long history of assisting the youth of DeKalb County with such programs as; Youth and Family Counseling, Active Parenting of Teens, Crisis Intervention, Emotion Management, Girls Empowerment, Early Intervention Alcohol and Drug groups and many others. YSB has a sliding fee scale and never turns anyone away for inability to pay. Call 748-2010 or Visit the YSB website at www.dcysb.com

Suicide Prevention Services

Suicide Prevention Services is a not-for-profit agency whose mission is "to open minds, save lives and restore hope through prevention, intervention, and postvention." It is one of seven such agencies in this country that has all 3 services for suicide education under 1 roof. SPS does year-round depression screenings free with an accompanying free first hour of counseling, provides counseling, telephone intervention on its hotlines, and offers education and training in the schools. SPS has support groups for Survivors of Suicide as well as for Attempters of Suicide. Services are offered on a sliding scale. SPS is located in Batavia, IL and serves 5 counties and 7 states. For further information, visit their website at www.spsfv.org.

Jumping off bridges

AWARDS

Official Selection	Independent Feature Project 2005 Rough Cut Lab in NYC
Grant Recipient	2005 Texas Filmmakers Production Fund
Official Selection	Emerging Narratives Section, 2002 Independent Feature Project
Semi Finalist	2002 Sundance Screenwriting Institute
Finalist	2002 Chesterfield Fellowship Competition
Semi-Finalist	2006 Women in Film Fund
Best of 2006	Green Cine's Best Undistributed Films from 2006 Festival Screenings
2007	Prism Award for Mental Health in a Motion Picture
Commendation	
2007 Award	Heroes in the Fight Award

Jumping off bridges CAST



Bryan Chafin (Zak Nelson) began his acting career at the age of six when he visited the set of an independent film shot in Austin. He had the look and personality the director was seeking and wound up on camera opposite the lead delivering his first line, "Do it again!" Bryan has starred in numerous short films including, *Plantin' Seeds* and *Pilot & Olo* and several independent films *No Small Ways*, *Sleeping Dogs* and Kat Candler's award winning *cicadas*. He co-starred as Samuel Martin in *The Patriot* with Mel Gibson. For his onscreen work in *The Patriot*, Bryan was nominated for the **Young Artist Award (2001): Best Ensemble in a Feature Film**. He has since been featured in *Friday Night Lights*.



Michael Emerson (Frank Nelson) made his New York stage debut playing Oscar Wilde in Moises Kaufman's **Gross Indecency**. He has appeared on Broadway in **The Iceman Cometh** with Kevin Spacey and **Hedda Gabler** opposite Kate Burton. Off-Broadway and regional work includes plays by Shakespeare, Moliere, Friel and LaGarce at The Roundabout, Arena Stage, McCarter, Huntington and many other theaters. Film credits include **The Imposters**, **Playing by Heart**, **Straight Jacket**, **Saw**, and **The Legend of Zorro**. On television he has played a number of off-beat and dangerous characters on programs like **The X-Files**, the **Law and Orders**, **Without a Trace**, **The Inside** and many others, including a turn as the might-be serial-killer William Hinks on **The Practice** for which he received a **2001 Emmy Award**. Michael can currently be seen in the role of Ben Linus on the ABC series **LOST**. He was nominated for a 2007 Best Supporting Actor Emmy for the role.



Katie Lemon (Lindsay Price) a junior at Anderson High School in Austin, Texas played the role of Lindsay in Kat Candler's film *jumping off bridges* and has since participated in theatrical productions at school. Katie is also involved in Project IT Girl, a program for high school girls interested in careers in technology, at Girlstart. Through this program she wrote and directed a PSA addressing mental health called "**Break the Silence**". She was recently on a panel for suicide prevention at the 2007 Mental Health of America Texas Conference. In the summer of 2007 she took a college credit course in film at the University of California Los Angeles, where she directed her first short film, **Fighting Fate**. She studied under Director/Producer Myrl Schreibman and writer Duane

Dell'Amico.



Glen Powell (Eric Turner) played Jackson Wheeler in the TNT miniseries, **Into the West**, Rich Wolf on the pilot episode of **Jack and Bobby**, Travis in Luke Wilson's **The Wendell Baker Story** and as the Long Fingered Boy in **Spy Kids 3-D**. More recently Glen played minor roles in **Fast Food Nation** and Ethan Hawke's new film, **The Hottest State**. Glen is an honor student at Westwood High

School in Austin, President of the Fraternity of Leaders, a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council, Young Life and the Westwood Varsity Lacrosse team. He was recognized as one of KVUE's "Five Kids Who Care" for his community service involvement. He'll be seen next in the Denzel Washington film **The Great Debaters**.



Savannah Welch (Grove Adams) was born in Nashville, Tennessee to country music singer, Kevin Welch. Savannah got the itch for acting at the age of seven. After landing roles in high school productions of "Our Town" and "Alice in Wonderland", Savannah knew she had found her calling. She moved to Austin, TX to study

acting at the University of Texas. Adventure soon called and she spent a year touring with a windblown western band, learning the nuts and bolts of filmmaking and editing as she made their home movies. Back in Austin, she settled back into acting and started modeling and signed on to her first agency in 2005. She's since starred in short films, promotional videos, and music videos. **jumping off bridges** marks her first starring role in a feature film.



For **Rhett Wilkins (Jimmy Nelson)** acting has always been a process of self-discovery. After graduating high school in San Antonio, he enrolled in acting classes on a whim. A few months later, however, he wanted to pursue acting more seriously and at the urging of his agency he moved to Los Angeles. After working in the low budget **Crocodile** by Tobe Hooper and television shows like **Boston Public**, Wilkins quickly became disenchanted with L.A. He took a break from acting, moved to New Braunfels, Texas, and worked in a plant nursery. Wilkins eventually returned to acting; he wrote, produced, and starred in his own short film, **Tuesday**. He most recently appeared in the hit indie film, **The Puffy Chair**, by Jay Duplass, which premiered at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival.